

REMARKS

Claims 6, 9 and 10-13 are pending in this application.

The Examiner indicated that claims 11-13 are allowed. Applicant gratefully acknowledges the indication of allowable subject matter.

The Examiner maintained the rejection of claims 1-10 under 35 U.S.C. Section 102 under either Trussell (US 4539655) or Rasmussen (US 5884072).

Although Applicant respectfully disagrees with the Examiner's rejections, Applicant has cancelled claims 1-5 and 7-8 solely to advance the prosecution of the application. Applicant explicitly reserves the right to file a continuation with the rejected claims.

Applicant submits that claim 10 has similar language to allowed claim 11 and should be also allowed. As in claim 11, claim 10 recites the feature that at least one control unit having a master capability detects or automatically assesses **status data of other control units** to offload the work of assessing status data of the other control units from the control station and transmit the detected status to the control station. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to withdraw the 102 rejection of claim 10.

Dependent claims 6 and 9 have been amended to depend from allowed claim 11. Thus, they are also patentable by virtue of their dependency from claim 11.

Based upon the above amendments and remarks, Applicant respectfully requests reconsideration of this application and its earlier allowance. Should the Examiner feel that a telephone conference with Applicant's attorney would expedite the prosecution of this application, the Examiner is urged to contact him at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,



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